

# South Asian Modern Art 2024

Grosvenor Gallery, London  
13 June – 5 July 2024

## PRESS RELEASE:

Grosvenor Gallery is delighted to announce its upcoming exhibition **South Asian Modern Art 2024**. The exhibition will be on display at the gallery from **13 June to 5 July 2024** and will be accompanied by an exhibition catalogue. It will include works by the leading names in South Asian modernism including Maqbool Fida Husain, Sayed Haider Raza, Francis Newton Souza, Abdur Rahman Chughtai, Syed Sadequain, Ivan Peries and Lancelot Ribeiro amongst others.

The main highlight of the exhibition is, however, a lost masterpiece **A Moonlight Music Party** from the **Norman Blount collection** of paintings by **Abanindranath Tagore** and fellow members of the Bengal School.

Norman Blount (1875-1930) was a jute broker in Calcutta and the joint secretary of The Indian Society of Oriental Art (ISOA). The ISOA was founded in 1907 in Calcutta and both Abanindranath and Gaganendranath Tagore worked tirelessly to develop the society. *"The Society served as a focus for the aspirations which were stirring in the rising generation of Bengali artists."*

Blount was one of the most active members during its early years, and along with the Tagore brothers and a handful of others, formed the purchase committee of the Government Art Gallery. Blount was close friends with Abanindranath and purchased several of his paintings around this time. As far as we are aware, this is the first time it has been exhibited publicly since 1903, when it was shown at the Government School of Art in Calcutta. The painting **A Moonlight Music Party** was reproduced and formed part of a special edition portfolio published and sold by the Society. The Victoria & Albert Museum have a copy of the portfolio in their collection, and an edition was shown at the V&A's exhibition of Modern Indian painting in spring 1914.

In the early 20th century, Abanindranath Tagore's pioneering work as an indigenous Indian modernist sought to counter the influence of Western art as taught in art schools under the British Raj, by modernizing Mughal and Rajput traditions and employing themes from India's mythology, epic and romantic tales, as well as from the life of people around him, reworking them in a highly romanticized style. Abanindranath assimilated Japanese techniques into his work, especially the use of wash, which gave his paintings an ethereal and other-worldly quality.

Some other highlights in the exhibition include; **Yaksha**, an intensely atmospheric painting by Jamini Prakash Gangooly, who was also a nephew of Rabindranath Tagore. The subject of this painting is from the story of Meghadūta by Kālidāsa, one of the great Sanskrit poems. In Indian mythology, yakshas are divine beings and guardian spirits of the natural world, with custody over



mountainous regions and bodies of water. It is believed that the worship of yakshas, along with other deities such as nagas and fertility goddesses, traces its origins to ancient indigenous cultures in India.

Another important painting is *Sentier*, a canvas painted by Sayed Haider Raza in 1966. *Sentier* (Path) was purchased by French collector Madame Vaillant from the Maison de la Culture du Havre in 1972. She was the daughter of René Boudet, a French industrialist in the gas industry, who had a large collection of paintings by Raza, several of which were included in the Centre Pompidou exhibition in 2023.

Other highlights include *Albizzias* by Ivan Peries, which was painted for his 1966 exhibition at the Commonwealth Institute Gallery in London; *Ask me Why?*, and important canvas painted by Francis Newton Souza which was exhibited in his exhibition *Black Art and Other Paintings*, held at Grosvenor Gallery in summer of 1966; A watercolour on paper painted by Abdur Rahman Chughtai of a Mughal Princess, which was originally given by the Artist to the National Bank of Pakistan in the 1960s.

For further details and high-resolution images please contact the gallery.

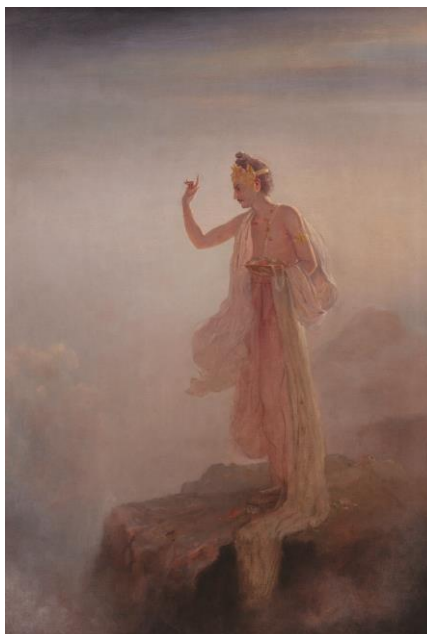


Abanindranath Tagore, *A Moonlight Music Party* (Circa 1903)





Left: Abdur Rahman Chughtai, *Mughal Princess* (Circa 1960)  
Right: Jamini Prakash Gangooly, *Yakhsha* (1908)



Left: Ivan Peries, *Albizzias* (1966)  
Right: Sayed Haider Raza, *Sentier*, 1966



---

**Press Enquiries:**

[art@grosvenorgallery.com](mailto:art@grosvenorgallery.com)

+44 (0)20 7484 7979

Instagram: @grosvenorgallery

---

**Gallery opening times:**

Weekdays: 10 am – 5.30 pm

Saturday: 12 – 4 pm (during exhibitions)

Sunday: Closed

**Directors** Conor M Macklin, Charles Moore, Kajoli Khanna  
**Registered in England No.** 2914566  
**VAT registration No.** 645 2528 36  
**Registered Office** Kingfisher House  
No. 11 Hoffmanns Way Chelmsford Essex CM1 1GU

**Grosvenor Gallery**  
**(Fine Arts) Ltd**  
35 Bury Street  
London  
SW1Y 6AU

T +44 (0)20 7484 7979

E [art@grosvenorgallery.com](mailto:art@grosvenorgallery.com)  
[www.grosvenorgallery.com](http://www.grosvenorgallery.com)